

UPI-97

(VIET)

WASHINGTON--CHAIRMAN J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT, D-ARK., OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE SAID TODAY THAT HANOI'S OFFER TO ADMIT MORE AMERICANS "MAY INDICATE A SLIGHT MOVEMENT TOWARD A WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE" BY NORTH VIETNAM.

FULBRIGHT SAID THAT IS ONLY "MY OWN FEELING." HOWEVER, HE SAID, THE MOVE OFFERED A HOPEFUL SIGN.

THE ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT SAID HE STILL FELT THAT THE U.S., AS THE STRONGER POWER, SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS AND COULD AFFORD TO DO MORE.

HE REPEATED HIS FEELING THAT THE "FIRST STEP SHOULD BE TO STOP THE BOMBING" OF NORTH VIET NAM.

FULBRIGHT MADE THE STATEMENT TO REPORTERS AFTER A TWO-HOUR AND 30 MINUTE CLOSED DOOR ORGANIZATION MEETING AT WHICH HIS COMMITTEE DISCUSSED PLANS FOR A RESUMPTION OF ITS INQUIRY INTO VIETNAM POLICIES AND OTHER PLANS FOR THE YEAR.

SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN RUSK ALREADY HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED AS THE FIRST WITNESS AT A CLOSED MEETING ON JAN. 16 AND AN OPEN SESSION JAN. 23.

FULBRIGHT SAID OTHER WITNESSES WOULD NOT BE ANNOUNCED UNTIL THE SCHEDULE IS MORE NEARLY COMPLETE. BUT SOME OTHER MEMBERS SAID THE INQUIRY MIGHT RIVAL IN SCOPE THE COMMITTEE'S WIDELY-PUBLICIZED AND OFTEN STORMY TELEVISED VIETNAM HEARINGS LAST YEAR.

"THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE BOMBING IS VERY DAMAGING AND VERY UNCOMFORTABLE FOR (THE NORTH VIETNAMESES)," FULBRIGHT SAID, "BUT WHAT EFFECT IT WILL HAVE (ON NEGOTIATIONS) WE CAN'T TELL."

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